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Closeups:

More Laughs than Frights At Amityville Horror Night

By BOB QUARTERONI
Times Staff Writer

You just knew it was going to be a long, hard night for professional "demonologists" Ed and Lorraine Warren when the capacity audience at Eisenhower Auditorium, instead of being scared by lustily cheered the announcement that "actual demons' voices" were going to be played on a tape recorder.

And the atmosphere of terror certainly wasn't deepened by the fact that the "demon" sounded like a cockney Howdy Doody; nor by the audience, nearly all Penn State students, who would laugh maniacally at comments meant to be terrifying; nor by the faux pas the Warrens seem to specialize in, such as saying that blood oozing from a pillow "is not a natural reaction."

Still, it was fun — suitable Halloween fare. The Warrens, a husband-and-wife team, referred to as "America's top ghost hunters" in a press release, showed slides and talked about various demonic infestations, poltergeists, the Amityville Horror, slime on walls, "ancient" blood oozing out of a statue, incubus (no succubus), a short, bewitched cleric in Canada, levitating twins in England, ghosts on steps, a nasty little raggedy-Ann doll who stabbed a policeman and sundry other things that go bump in the night.

The Warrens explained all of this in terms of demons and "negative energy flows" and the like and sounded sincere in their explanations, no matter how incomprehensible.

The Warrens have had a good deal of experience. They've been investigating the demon world, such as it is, for 30 years and have been involved in over 2,000 cases. Mrs. Warren is a self-proclaimed psychic and medium while Mr. Warren's bottom line is devils, he has assisted, he says, in 42 exorcisms over the years.

The Warrens also write a weekly ghost column in something called The Tattler and have a television program named, aptly enough, "Ghost Hunting With Ed and Lorraine Warren."

They are best known, perhaps, for their role as investigators of the Amityville Horror, the durable Long Island entity which was not only responsible for a book and a movie, but also for last night's crowd.

The Warrens promised, from the start of their show, to show the "only slides" taken during the period when the Amityville whatever was supposedly active.

This brought the crowd to an anticipatory peak quickly quenched when the slides turned out to be mostly of the Lutz family—the inhabitants of the house—sitting and standing around; sort of home slides of an American family and the undead.

Some of the slides purported to show things from the otherworld: a child's head in one and a priest named Padre Pio in the antlers of an elk—or was it a moose?—in another.

Slides like this are like assassination theories: you see what you want. It looked like reflections and shadows to me, but I could see how you could discern apparitions and heads if you were so inclined.

They told of their visit to the Long Island house and the hideous presence they experienced and how they were followed by the Horror—on the turnpike perhaps—to their home in Monroe, Conn., some 50 miles away.

They said that the Horror was one of the strongest forces they had ever experienced and that..."it has killed once. Who's to say it won't kill again."

Not me.

Meier Article in 'Courses' Text

"Connections: Technology and Change," the Courses by Newspaper series appearing Wednesdays in The Times, included as a supplment to this week's lesson a selection by Dr. Hugo A. Meier, associate professor of history at the University.

The Meier reading, in the Course anthology "Technology and Change," edited by John G. Burke and Marshall

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